



THE LAKELAND TIMES



Airport titan Bob Heck dies at 85

By Heather Schaefer
OF THE RIVER NEWS

The driving force behind the modernization of the Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport has died.

Bob Heck, who served on the airport commission for 43 years before his retirement in 2018, and whose determined salesmanship kept the airport in business when its future was in jeopardy in the 1970s, passed away Friday morning at the age of 85, according to See Heck. . . page 4



Farmers raise concerns, opposition to proposed manure storage ordinance

Environmentalists push regulation of intermittent streams, smaller properties

By Richard Moore
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Environmentalists marshaled support last week for a proposed code amendment in Oneida County that would significantly expand the regulation of many small and large farming operations, specifically, a proposed manure storage ordinance that could extend well beyond the shoreland zone.

Small farmers marshaled back,

saying the county should not enact regulations beyond existing state standards and that the regulations could imperil the survival of the county's many hobby farms.

The debate played out during a public hearing by the county's land and water conservation committee that turned out not to be a legal public hearing at all but an arguably illegal meeting that was re-

See Concern. . . page 4



TREVOR GREENE/LAKELAND TIMES

SLEDDIN' ON THE BEARSKIN

Kevin Knabenhans rides his snowmobile across the Bearskin trail's Minocqua trestle on Friday, Jan. 7 in Minocqua.

Public comment at Presque Isle town board meetings becomes an issue

By Trevor Greene
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

The town of Presque Isle is currently dealing via lawsuit with a citizens' group regarding a draft hazardous wake ordinance.

Now, public comment on town board agendas has become another issue for the town board to deal with.

Presque Isle town supervisor Carl Wolter began the town board's regular meeting on Jan. 7 by reading a letter expressing his opinion regarding those who make public comments and how he believes public comment should be facilitated going forward.

That is normally done at the discretion of the town chairman, who runs the meetings.

"What I have to say is probably gonna fall on deaf ears because I think the people that I'd like to address this to, they are not here," Wolter said.

See Issue . . . page 7

Wakeboats: A wavy issue

Stengl: 'You're seeing more of them from all manufacturers'

By Brian Jopek
OF THE LAKELAND TIMES

Wake boats, growing in popularity in the past few years, have become a bit of an issue on area lakes.

The watercraft have been part of discussions regarding boat landings and ordinance enforcement on lakes such as Lake Minocqua the Minocqua town board has had in the past couple of years.

Bill Stengl, owner of Stengl Marine in Minocqua and also a member of the Minocqua town board, told

The Lakeland Times for a lot of people, "there is a perceived issue."

"First of all, wake boats have a very high profile," he said. "They're the newest boats on the lake, they're the most expensive boats on the lake. A lot of times, they've got the stereo systems and the metal flake (paint). They stand out and the capabilities of the boats that are being bought today are really incredible. I mean, they can throw some impressive waves."

Wake boats are, he said, the "fastest growing seg-

ment" in pleasure boating.

"Growing faster than personal watercraft, recreational stern drives, even fishing boats," he said. "You're seeing more of them from all manufacturers on all lakes across the country and the reason for that is they're a tremendous amount of fun."

"The main difference between wake boats and ski boats has almost everything to do with the wake that trails from behind the watercraft," reads an article from

See Boats. . . page 14

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Winneconne man receives prison sentence for fatal Minocqua crash

By Jamie Taylor
OF THE RIVER NEWS

A 32-year-old Winneconne man was sentenced Wednesday to 18 months in prison, to be followed by 6 1/2 years extended supervision, in connection with a fatal rollover crash in Minocqua on Sept. 6, 2020.

According to online court records, Kent T. Herbert appeared before Oneida County circuit judge Patrick O'Melia, with his attorney Andrew Mishlove, for the sentencing hearing. He entered a "no contest" plea Sept. 30 to the class D felony of homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle.

After having been free on a \$40,000 signature bond since his Oct. 26, 2020 initial appearance, Herbert was taken into custody following the Sept. 30 hearing.

According to the police report attached to the criminal complaint filed Oct. 15, 2020, Herbert was the driver in the rollover crash of a 2016 Ram pickup truck near Indian Point Road. The truck's passenger, Colton D. Marx, 28, Butte Des Morts, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Herbert sustained serious injuries and was transported first to Howard Young Medical Center and then to another medical facility.

According to the complaint, Herbert's blood alcohol concentration was .212; 0.08% is the legal limit in Wisconsin.

According to online court records, Hebert waived his right to a preliminary hearing on Dec. 10, 2020, and entered not guilty pleas at his Dec. 28, 2020 arraignment. At a March 3, 2021 pre-trial conference, it was announced that an agreement was in the works and a sentencing hearing was scheduled.

Herbert had faced up to 25 years in prison and fines totaling \$100,000 on each charge. It was the second count, homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle with a prohibited alcohol concentration, where confusion on the mandatory minimum of 5 years in prison has come up in a couple cases locally as a clarifying decision from the Wisconsin Supreme Court didn't come until late summer.

A plea hearing had originally been scheduled for June 10, but Mishlove, citing the appeal, asked for a continuance until the decision was announced.

According to Wisconsin Statute 940.09(1c)(a), the sentencing court originally had the option to impose less than the 5-year mandatory mini-

mum if the judge "finds a compelling reason and places its reason on the record." The case before the State Supreme Court asked for a determination on exactly how much discretion trial judges have in this regard.

Both Mishlove and Oneida County district attorney Michael Schiek filed motions on the matter and O'Melia issued his ruling Aug. 12. On Aug. 13, Mishlove asked for a plea hearing to resolve the case without going to trial.

In the end, since part of the plea agreement with Herbert included Schiek dismissing the second charge, O'Melia did not have that statutory constraint placed on him in handing down a sentence.

A number of victim impact statements were filed with the court in support of Herbert. Even members of the victim's family, who have supported Herbert through the legal process, spoke on his behalf prior to sentencing, according to the court records.

O'Melia ruled that Herbert is entitled to 98 days jail credit, and is eligible for both the Substance Abuse Program and Challenge Incarceration Program.

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Judge denies former deputy's motion to dismiss stalking, misconduct case

Preliminary hearing set for Jan. 12

BY RIVER NEWS STAFF

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 12, in the case of former Oneida County sheriff's deputy Stetson Grant.

Grant, 35, is charged with stalking (domestic abuse), misconduct in public office/act inconsistent with the duties of office, false imprisonment (domestic abuse), disorderly conduct (domestic abuse) and criminal damage to property (domestic abuse).

According to online court records, his most recent court appearance was Wednesday, Jan. 5 at which time Oneida County circuit judge Mike Bloom denied a motion filed by defense attorney Maggie Hogan to dismiss the case due to a "defective complaint."

"Specifically, the complaint fails to set forth essential facts from which it could be inferred that the defendant committed a crime, and fails to state the essential facts constituting the offense charged as required by law," Hogan wrote in the motion filed Dec. 22.

However, after hearing argument, Bloom ruled that the "charges and supporting documentation" were sufficient, court records state.

The case was filed on Oct. 14, 2021 and Grant made his initial appearance Nov. 1.

Price County district attorney Kevin Kelz is handling the matter as a special prosecutor.

According to the complaint, Grant is accused of calling a woman as many as 50 to 150 times a day and entering her home on more than one occasion after she asked him to leave. The complaint also states police are in

See Case. . . page 14

Issue

From page 1

"But I would like to remind everybody that this is a meeting of the town board. It is not a meeting of the populous in the chairs. In the past, some of the discussions have gotten out of hand, so if there's anything said, it should be on agenda items only."

He said public comment should be limited to two minutes, and people should only speak one time.

"I think it should be voters and taxpayers only," Wolter said. "People should identify themselves and if they are a voter and a taxpayer, they should let us know."

If there are complaints, he said, individuals should come to the town office on Saturday mornings when town chairman John MacLean holds office hours.

Wolter then said people should respect the office of the town chair and town supervisors, noting he believes MacLean "has been a good listener," while also pointing out that MacLean thanks everyone after comments are made whether he likes or dislikes that particular comment.

"Most issues have two sides, John has listened to both sides," Wolter said. "Because some people haven't gotten their way, doesn't mean that he hasn't listened."

Referring to issues which stemmed from previous town board discussion regarding hazardous wakes and the draft ordinance the LWA was pushing to get approved, Wolter said there is a problem.

"And some people have said (during public comment) 'Oh no, no, no we're not connected with that' when in fact they are because I have a list of people that are on that alliance," he said.

Wolter concluded by once more asking people to keep their com-

ments to two minutes.

Town supervisor Cathy Logan Weber agreed with Wolter but pointed out people are able to comment on anything they wish according to Wisconsin open meetings law, which also doesn't require a municipality to have public comment on a meeting agenda.

"It doesn't mean we discuss it or talk to them about it," she said. "But they can bring up any subject they choose."

MacLean said he thinks public comment should be limited to agenda items and Logan Weber reiterated what she had said.

"It is a meeting of the board though,"

MacLean replied. "So if we choose not to have any public comment, then there won't be any public comments at all."

"That's correct," Logan Weber said.

Public Comment

During the first public comment section under old business, former Presque Isle resident, and advisory member of the LWA, Ann Milne commented on the agenda item "public comment."

At the last regular town board meeting on Dec. 2, Milne was unable to make public comments because, according to MacLean and Wolter, she is not a current resident taxpayer or voter in Presque Isle.

During the Jan. 7 meeting, Milne was allowed to speak.

"I'm here to make public comments about the agenda item, 'Public Comments,'" she said. "I wrote the town board following the last town board meeting in December to state that after owning property in Presque Isle

for 35 years, I was fortunate enough to sell my property Oct. 1, but I have not had time to buy another property."

Milne said she does rent a home in the summer and she is also looking to buy another home in the near future.

Milne said the board silenced her at the Dec. 2 meeting as MacLean and Wolter questioned if she owned property or paid taxes in the town.

"Neither of those questions have ever been asked of any other people making public comments, and indeed, many people have appeared before this town board to make public

comments who do not live, own, rent or pay property taxes in Presque Isle," Milne said and gave examples to support her statement.

There was a man from Marenisco, Mich. and another from Wakefield, Mich. who spoke at previous meetings about all-terrain vehicles.

"A subject you like," Milne noted.

She added boat dealers from Minocqua previously made public comments at meetings past.

"I think your facts are pretty clear," Milne said. "Your intention to silence me and others is all about a subject matter the two of you (MacLean and Wolter) do not want to talk about: hazardous wakes."

Continuing to allude to Wolter and MacLean, she said they refused to put the hazardous wake item on the agenda and when it would be an agenda item, they would try to remove it.

As one person from the audience walked out, Milne brought up the litigation regarding hazardous wakes between the town and 150 registered Presque Isle voters, stating MacLean

"People should identify themselves, and if they are a voter and a taxpayer, they should let us know."

Carl Wolter

Presque Isle town supervisor

and Wolter "hide behind that excuse as to why (they) can't talk about it."

Milne then suggested MacLean and Wolter's "refusal" to let her make public comment at the last meeting was a violation of the First Amendment.

"You can't censor public comment due to content you don't like," she said. "Whether you like the content or not, people in this country still have a right to freedom of speech."

In an emotional tone, Milne continued, saying it is the duty of elected government officials to uphold the constitution.

Milne explained she had met with MacLean shortly after he was elected as town chairman several times. She said she and MacLean forged a friendship based on mutual respect and straightforwardness.

"I believe I have respected that," Milne said. "I told you respectfully and frankly that if you continue to abuse the process that it would get you in trouble ... I have tried John, I have really, really tried to help you. My comments last month that you censored would have been my sincere efforts to help you put the litigation of the hazardous wake ordinance in the rearview mirror to get it behind all of us, but you cut off my outstretched hand, and you cut off my constitutional right to speak."

Milne concluded with one last comment directed at MacLean.

"You need to do everything you can to right the ship, to follow proper procedures," she said. "Whether that be how you spend taxpayer money, how you let people participate in open government or how you follow the constitution. You need to get this right. I appreciate you letting me make public comments tonight. I look at this as a good step in the right direction, and thank you very much."

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